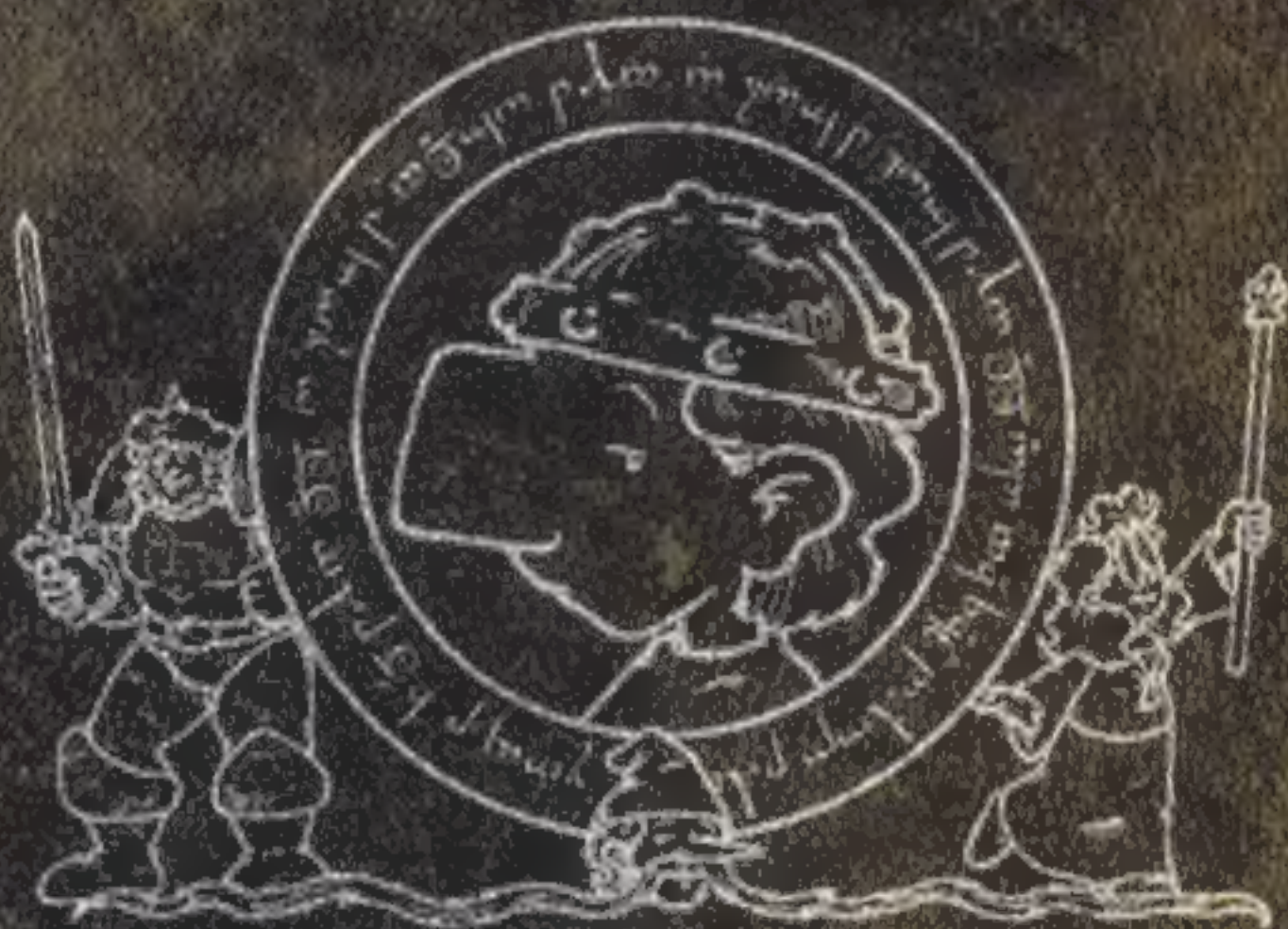


\$2.99 #23

Noodwick

THE LORD OF THE HIRELINGS



RETURN OF THE BLING-BLING



Nodwick

BY AARON WILLIAMS

ONE LESS
DRAGON, ONE MORE
TREASURE HAUL!

EVEN
THOUGH IT'S
GOOD ANOTHER ICKY-
POO DRAGON IS OUT
OF COMMISSION, DON'T
YOU THINK IT
WAS KIND OF
UNFAIR?

ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE
AND DRAGONSLAYING.

INCLUDING
HAVING THE
HENCHMAN "GO
SCOUT THE INSIDE OF
THE DRAGON FOR
WEAK SPOTS?"

IT ~~WORKED~~,
DIDN'T IT?

I DON'T THINK IT
MATTERED MUCH SINCE YOU HAD
ARTAX PUT A FEW "RUNES OF ACIDIC EBOLA"
TEMPORARY TATTOOS ON ME BEFORE MY
"RECONNAISSANCE MISSION."

HA-HA! WHAT A KIDDER,
HUM? HONEST, I GOT THOSE TATTOOS
FROM A BOX OF "FAIRIE FLAKES"
CEREAL... HEIL.

NODWICK #23 by Aaron Williams, November 2003. Distributed by Dork Storm Press, published by Henschman Publishing, 3545 Holmes St, Kansas City, MO 64110. Fax: (608)255-1342. E-mail: aaron@nodwick.com. Story and art ©2003 Aaron Williams. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication save for brief review excerpts may be reproduced without the express consent of the copyright holder. This is a work of fiction; any similarities to any actual persons or henchmen save for the purpose of satire is purely coincidental. ADVERTISING: sales@DorkStorm.com. SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$26 per year. Please contact adventureretail2@qwest.net, or call (651)-488-2433 details. All letters to NODWICK assumed intended for publication unless otherwise stated, and become the property of the copyright holder. Tolkien? No thanks... I'm trying to kick the hobbit! FIRST PRINTING, November 2003. PRINTED IN CANADA



SO DID YOU INVENTORY THE LOOT YET OR WHAT?

YEAH, IT'S PRETTY STANDARD: GOLD, SILVER, A LITTLE ARMOR, SOME WEAPONRY...

ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY?



A FEW NOTABLES, THERE'S A SET OF WHAT APPEAR TO BE MYTHRIL BOXER SHORTS, A SHIELD WITH A SMILEY FACE ON IT, A BLACK ORB THAT ANSWERS QUESTIONS WHEN YOU SHAKE IT UP, AND AN "EDDIE DISEMBOWLER" BRAND TUNIC OF RAZOR-SILK.

OH, AND A WOODEN BOX CONTAINING "THIS ONE RING."



WHAT WAS THAT?

THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS ON THE BOX. "THIS ONE RING."

OH, DEARIE ME.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...



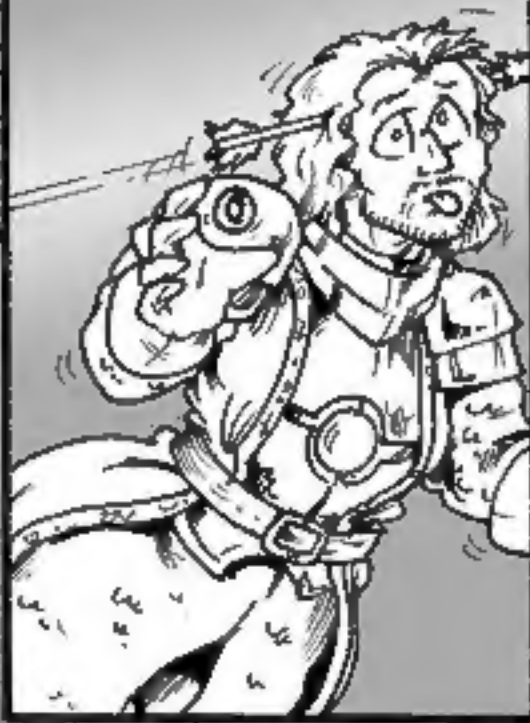
OOOO-KAY? ANYONE WANT TO CLUE ME IN? WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT IT?

LONG AGO, THIS ONE RING WAS FORGED BY A POWERFUL SORCERER TO RULE THE WORLD...

BUT IT DIDN'T WORK.



SO THE KING WHO KILLED THE SORCERER TOOK THIS ONE RING, AND TRIED TO RULE THE WORLD... BUT IT DIDN'T WORK OUT FOR HIM, EITHER.



A HALFLING FOUND IT NEXT, AND THE LEGENDS SAY IT TWISTED HIM...

...BUT MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO KNEW HIM SAID HE WASN'T QUITE RIGHT TO BEGIN WITH.



AND THE RING'S BEEN LOST EVER SINCE, SOUGHT BY THOSE WHO CRAVED ITS POWER.



...USUALLY FINDING EVIL AND MISFORTUNE, INSTEAD.

SO, THEN, WHY DOES ANYONE WANT IT?

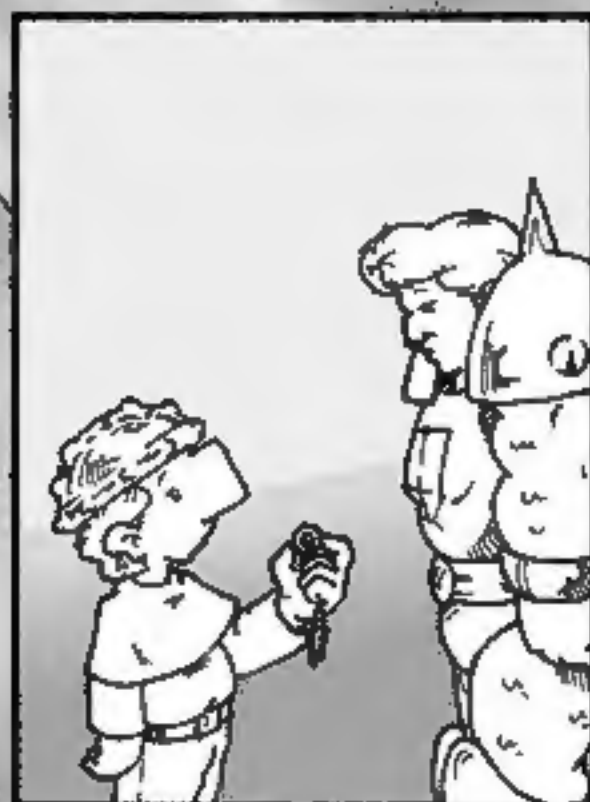
TO RULE THE WORLD, SILLY!

BIG "DUH" ON THAT ONE, NODWICK!



NOW HANG ON A MINUTE. IT DIDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR THE GUY WHO MADE IT, IT DIDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR THE GUY WHO KILLED FOR IT, AND IT DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO THE LAST KNOWN PERSON TO HAVE IT, RIGHT?





I'M NOT FOLLOWING.

WE MUST DESTROY IT!

THE LEGENDS SAY IT CAN ONLY BE UNMADE IN THE FIRES OF MOUNT DUUM.

NODWICK, YOU'VE PROBABLY ALREADY BEEN AFFECTED BY THE RING'S POWER. I'M AFRAID THAT YOU MUST BE THE RINGBRINGER!

WHAT POWER? IT--

I DON'T ENVY YOU THIS FATE, SMALL ONE. YOU MUST FIGHT ITS EVIL UNTIL WE REACH MOUNT DUUM.

HE'LL HAVE MY SWORD!



AND MY MAGIC!

AND MY DUCT TAPE!

WE ARE THE ACCOUNTANCIESHIP OF THIS RING!



BREAK!





FORGETTING
SOMETHING, NODWICK?

HUH? I
DONT-

WE DIDNT SLAY
A DRAGON JUST SO ITS
TREASURE COULD GET A
SUNTAN.

OH I THOUGHT YOU
WERE IN A HURRY--

LOOKS LIKE THE
RING'S POWER IS CORRUPTING
HIM ALREADY.

I AM NOT
BEING COR-

OH, POOH! WE'LL HAVE
TO SCOOT BEFORE HE BECOMES FILLED
WITH TOO MUCH NAUGHTY-BADNESS
TO RECOVER!

YEAGAR, WE
MIGHT HAVE TO TIE HIM
UP AT NIGHT, FOR HIS
OWN SAFETY.

DEFINITELY.
AND WE SHOULD
KEEP AN EYE ON HIM
FOR MORE SIGNS OF
THE RING MAKING
HIM EVIL.

SUCH A
HARD THING
TO HAPPEN TO
SUCH A BRIGHT
SOUL!

GIVE ME A
BREAK! I'VE SEEN
SNACK FOODS WITH
MORE EVIL IN THEM
THAN THERE IS IN
THIS RING!

TSKI THE
GOOD VERSION OF
NODWICK WOULD
NEVER HAVE SAID
ANYTHING LIKE
THAT.

YOU'RE
RIGHT, ARTAX.
HE'LL PROBABLY
BE A HOMICIDAL
MANIAC BY
NIGHTFALL.

I'M CERTAINLY
GETTING THERE.

SEE? SEE?
HIS NORMAL HAPPY-
GO-LUCKY HENCHMAN
MANNER IS BEING
REPLACED BY A SOUL OF
SUCH VILENESS IT COULD
PROBABLY WILT
PLANTS!

OOOH, KEEP
HIM CLEAR OF THE
WILDFLOWERS.

SO HOW FAR DO WE HAVE TO GO BEFORE WE GET TO MOUNT DUM?

IT'S QUITE A JOURNEY. WE SHOULD PROBABLY STOP IN THE NEXT TOWN FOR THE NIGHT.

IT LOOKS LIKE THE NEXT TOWN IS THE HAMLET OF "GLEE."

GLEE
5 MILES

FIVE MILES AND SEVERAL TANKARDS LATER.

WHY ON EARTH DID ANYONE EVER NAME THIS PLACE "GLEE?"

THEY GOT SALOTTA SCHUFF TO MAKE ME GLEEFULEENSTICATED, THAT'S F'SHURE.

WE SHOULD PROBABLY KEEP QUIET AND NOT DRAW ATTENTION TO OURSELVES.

WHILE I DON'T CARE FOR PLACES LIKE THIS, I LOVE THEIR PAPER UMBRELLAS! AREN'T THEY CUTE?

I'LL TRY TO BE INCONSPICUOUS WHILE CARRYING ENOUGH TREASURE TO RANSOM A KINGDOM, MYKAY?

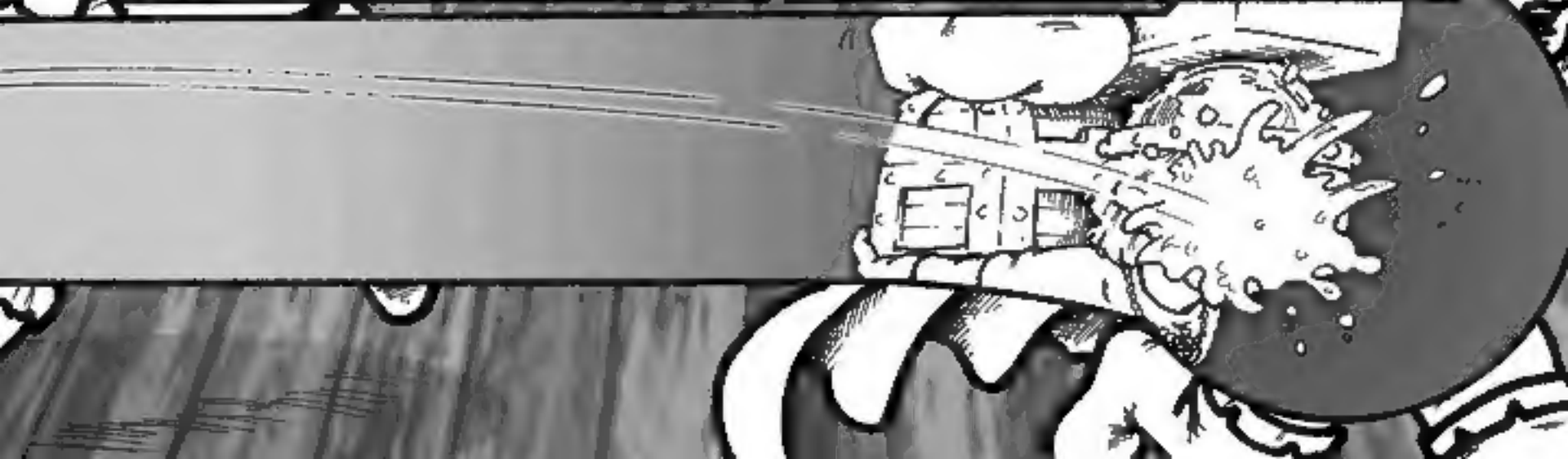
WASHOO WORRYN 'BOUT? NOBODY KNOWS WE GOT THISH ONE RINGIE-DINGIE ANYHOO.

KEEP YOUR VOICE—

ANNNNGGGGGSSSSST....



ANGST! ANGST!
ANGST! ANGST!
ANGST!





OUR HEROES ELUDE THEIR FASHIONABLY TRAGIC PURSUERS LONG ENOUGH TO REACH GLEE'S FERRY...



OH, DEAR!
IT'S NOT COMING
OFF! WE'RE GOING TO
NEED HELP IF WE'RE
GOING TO SAVE
HIM!

SAVE ME?
FROM WHAT? TOO
MUCH FOUNDATION
AND BAD TASTE IN
JEWELRY?

IF I'M IN
SUCH BAD SHAPE, CAN
I LEAVE SOME OF THIS
STUFF BEHIND?

YEP,
DELIRIOUS...

HE'S DELIRIOUS.
I HAVEN'T SEEN THIS MUCH DENIAL
SINCE I VISITED THE GREAT
PYRAMIDS.

I THINK I KNOW
SOME FRIENDS WHO CAN
RESTORE HIM!

WE'RE ALMOST
THERE! THE HOME OF
THE S.C.A. ELVES IS OVER THE
NEXT RISE. THEY SHOULD BE
ABLE TO FIX UP OUR
RINGBRINGER!

"S.C.A.?"

SYLVANS
FOR COMMERCIAL
ACTIVITY.







MANY SNACKS AND SHOPPING SPREES LATER...

IT WAS NICE
OF THEM TO GIVE
US A FIFTEEN PERCENT
DISCOUNT ON A
CELEBRATION IN OUR
HONOR!

I LOVE
THESE WOODEN
TANKARDS!

AND THIS DRAGON
INCENSE BURNER WILL LOOK GREAT
IN THE LAB!

I CAN'T BELIEVE
YOU SPENT THE ENTIRE
TREASURE HAIL ON
CERAMICS AND
HANDCRAFTS.

SOUNDS LIKE
SOMEONE'S FILLED
WITH NEGATIVE
ENERGY. ACCORDING
TO ELF ROND
HUBBARD...

I MUST
POSSESS
IT!



HUZZAH!

NODWICK, MY
CERAMIC GRIFFON KEG-
TAP BETTER STILL BE IN
ONE PIECE!

WHO IS
THAT?



IT'S SNEAGOR!

WHO?

UNHAND ME! I
MUST HAVE IT! MY
COVETOUS!

WHEN WE
WERE TOGETHER, WE
HAD RESPECT! OTHERS CAME TO
US TO ADMIRE HOW KEWL WE
WERE! BUT THEN THE COVETOUS
WAS TAKEN FROM US BY THE
DRAGON! WE CANNOT REST
UNTIL WE HAVE
IT AGAIN!



THE HALFLING WHO
ONCE POSSESSED THIS
ONE RING!

WE MUST HAVE
THE COVETOUS!



NOW DO YOU
SEE WHAT IT'S
CAPABLE OF?

AND HOW
LONG WERE YOU
"KEWL?"

ABOUT SIX AND A
HALF MINUTES, BUT IT
WAS A GOOD SIX AND A
HALF MINUTES!

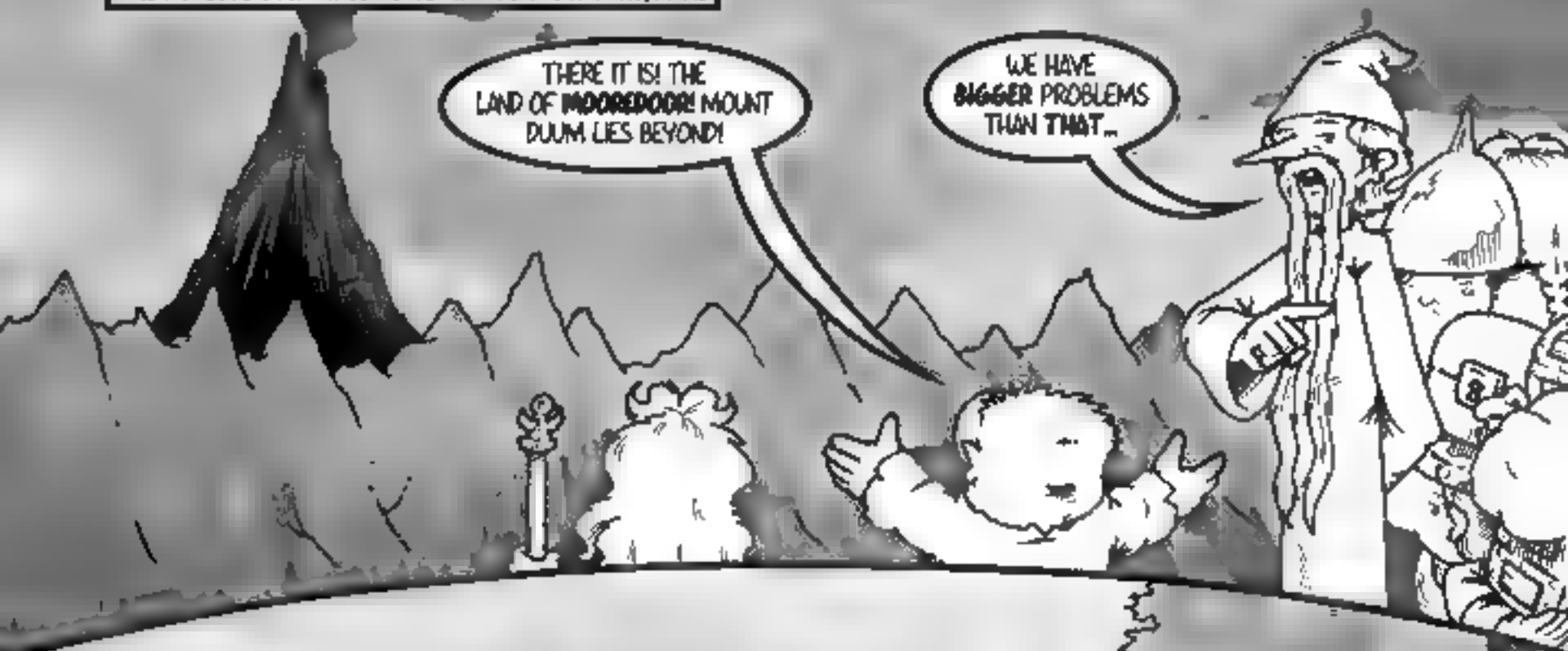


CAN WE
GET TO MOUNT
DUM SOON? I'D
LIKE TO GET RID OF
SEVERAL THINGS
THERE.

WE CAN TAKE
YOU THERE! WE KNOWS
THE WAY TO MOUNT DUM!
AND WE PROMISES THAT WE
WONT TRY AND CONK YOU
WHEN YOU ARENT LOOKING
SO WE CAN LIVE HAPPILY
EVER AFTER WITH
THE COVETOUS!
COME! COME!



THE FORESTS EVENTUALLY GIVE WAY TO MOUNTAINS, AND...



THE RINGBRINGER WILL
HAVE TO GO ON INTO MOOREDOOR
WHILE WE HOLD OFF THE
SPAZGHOULS!

WHAT?

WE'D ONLY
SLOW YOU DOWN.

AND THE THOUSAND
POUNDS OF LOOT I'M
CARRYING WON'T?

SMEAGOR,
TAKE THE RINGBRINGER TO
MOUNT DUMI!

I THOUGHT YOU
DIDN'T TRUST--

GOOD LUCK!

COME, OH
DEFENSELESS
BEARER OF THE
COVETOUS!

YEAH, SURE.

BEHOLD
THE GATES OF
MOOREDOOR! BUT WE
WILL TAKE US
THROUGH A SECRET
WAY!

I DON'T
THINK SO.

WHAT?
WHY DO YOU NOT
BELIEVE US?

I'VE SEEN THIS
STORY BEFORE. YOU'RE
GOING TO TAKE ME TO SOME
PLACE WHERE I CAN GET EATEN
BY SOMETHING NASTY. NOPE, I'VE
FALLEN FOR THAT ONE A FEW
TOO MANY TIMES. WE'RE
GOING IN THE FRONT
DOOR.

WHO DARES ENTER
MOOREDOOR?

ANYTHING TO
DECLARE?

CHEAP HANDCRAFTS
AND SOUVENIRS.

HAVE ANY OF
YOUR BAGS BEEN OUT OF
YOUR SIGHT OR PACKED
BY SOMEONE UNKNOWN
TO YOU?

NO.

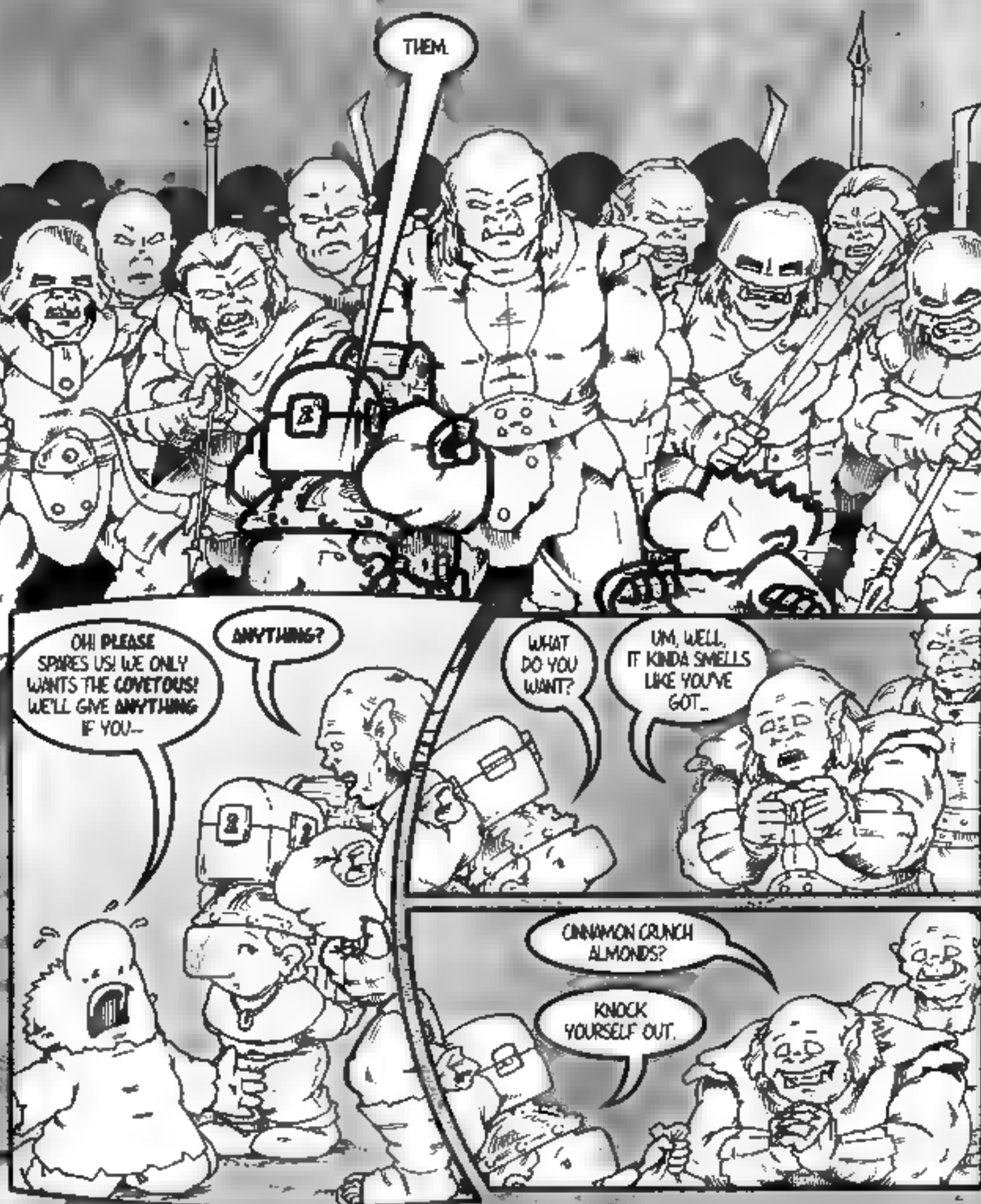
DO YOU
HAVE THIS ONE
RING?

UHL NO?

OKAY,
MOVE ALONG.

WE CANNOT BELIEVE
THAT WORKED.

I CAN'T BELIEVE
I'VE GOT A UNICORN PAINTED ON MY
NOSE, SO WE'RE EVEN.





WE IS STILL
ALIVE! HUIZZAH
FOR US!

YEAH, AND
NOW WE GET TO CLIMB
INTO AN ACTIVE VOLCANO.
WHEE!

SOON, INSIDE THE FIERY MOUNTAIN.

FINALLY.
WELL, TIME TO GET
THIS OVERWITH.

NO! YOU CANNOT
DESTROY THE COVETOUS! DON'T YOU
FEEL IT CALLING TO US?

IT WANTS
TO COME BACK TO
SMEAGOR!

LOOK, THIS RING DOES
NOTHING! EVERYONE WANTS IT BECAUSE
OF SOME LEGEND THAT CLAIMS IT HAS
SOME KIND OF POWER!

WATCH.
I'LL PUT IT ON
MYSELF!



WAIT. I CAN
FEEL IT! THE RAW COSMIC
ENERGY!



I CAN USE
IT TO BEND ALL
MORTALS TO MY
WILL AND RULE
THE WORLD!

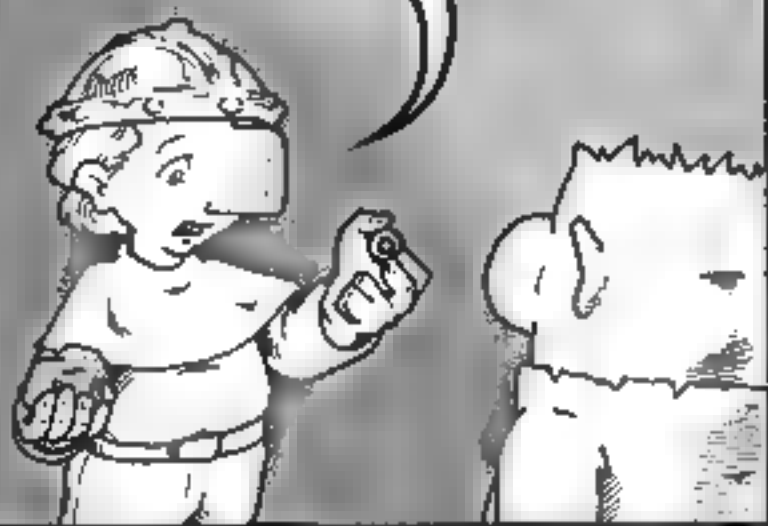
REALLY?



NO! BECAUSE IT'S A
HOAX! YOU'VE BECOME OBSESSED
WITH A STORY! EVERYONE ASSUMES IT
HAS POWERS JUST BECAUSE THE TALES
SAY IT DOES. IT'S A GREAT FABLE,
BUT IT ISN'T REAL!

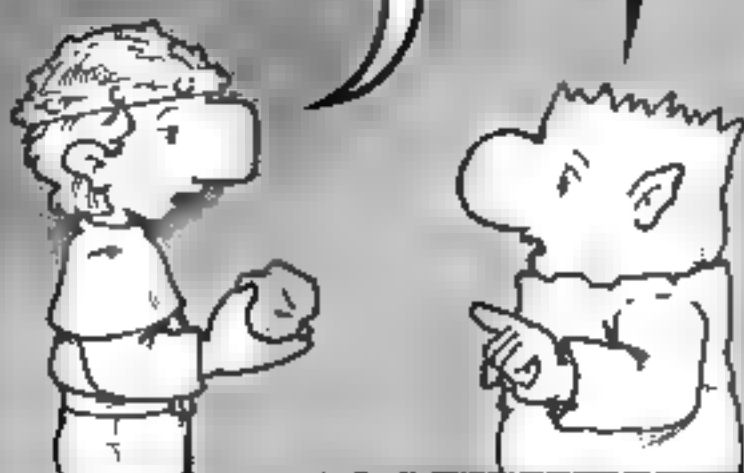
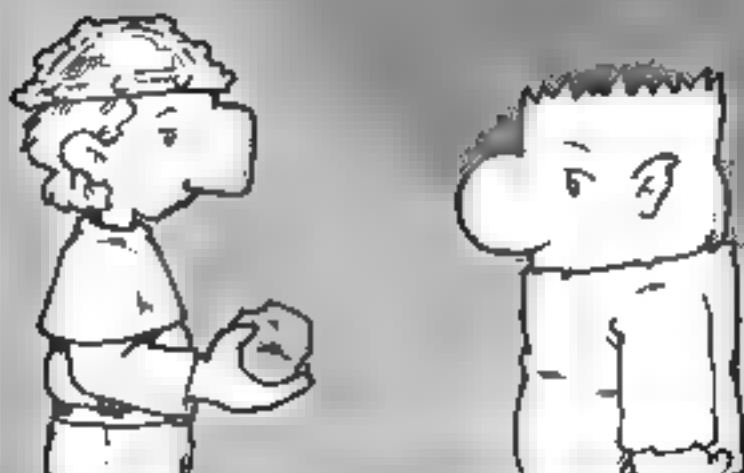


LOOK, THERE'S NO
MORE POWER IN THIS ONE ROCK
THAN IN THIS ONE RING!



THIS ONE ROCK?

IT'S JUST A ROCK.



IT IS MINE!
MY NEW COVETOUS!
HUZZAH!



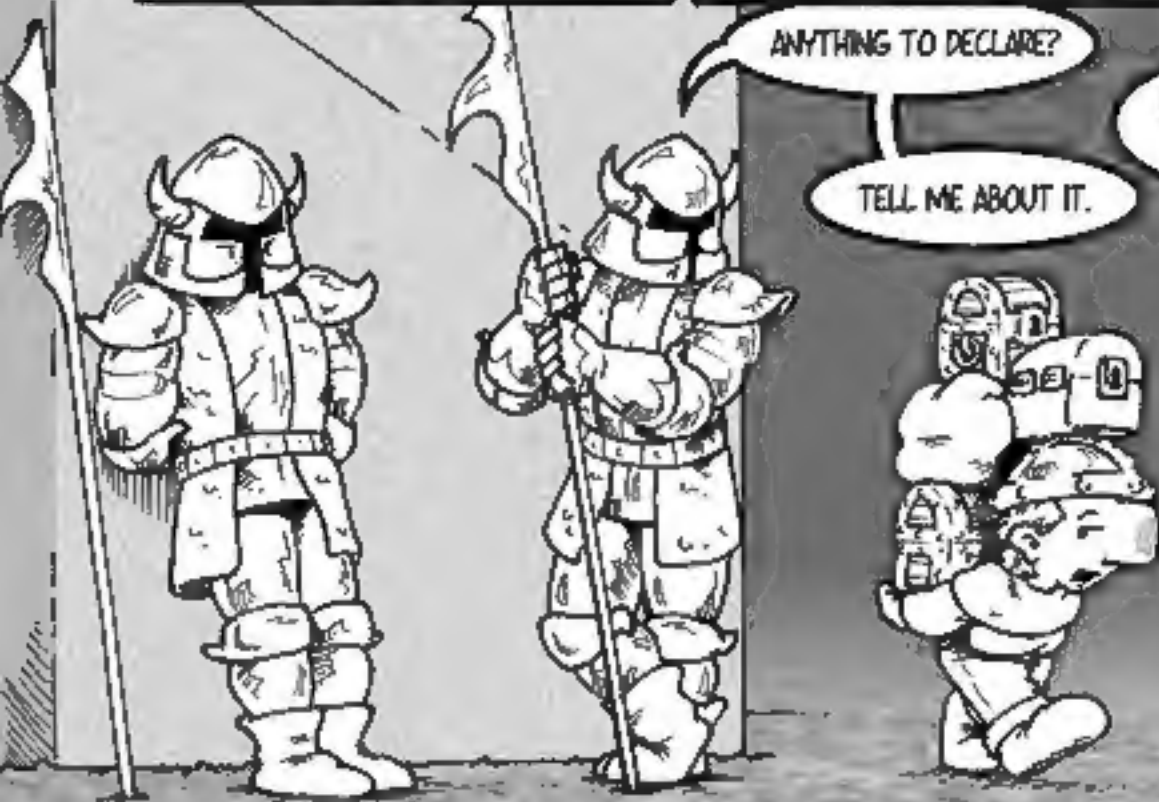
BUT...



ANYTHING TO DECLARE?

TELL ME ABOUT IT.

PEOPLE ARE
STRANGE?



ALL FINISHED WITH
THE NAZGOTHIS?

YEAH IT
TURNS OUT THEY
CAN'T STAND TO
WIN BATTLES FOR
SOME REASON.

I THINK IT
MADE THEM FEEL
TOO GOOD ABOUT
THEMSELVES SO THEY
GOT ALL DEPRESSED
AND LEFT.

HOW'D
YOU DO?

THIS ONE RING
IS HISTORY.

NO KIDDING.

WHAT A RELIEF!
SOMETHING LIKE THAT JUST
SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED
TO EXIST.

SO NOW YOU
THINK IT WAS FOR
REAL, HUH?

THE EFFECT
IT HAD ON OTHERS
WAS REAL ENOUGH.
WHEN WHAT LEGENDS
CAN TEACH US IS
UPSTAGED BY THE
LEGENDS
THEMSELVES...

BLAH-BLAH-BLAH
LET'S GO HOME SO I CAN
TRY OUT MY WRENFEST
STUFF!

OOOH! I WANT
TO ARRANGE THE MAX
ROSES I BOUGHT!

AND I'VE GOT SOME NEW
POINTED HATS TO TRY ON.

NOT TO MENTION THE
EATS. NOW YOU'RE SURE THIS 'MEAD'
STUFF IS BOOZE?

YEP. IT'LL GO
GREAT WITH MY CRUNCH
ALMONDS!

SIGH

A CENTURY OR SO LATER...



WHAT WAS THAT?

THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS ON THE BOX "THIS ONE ROCK."

OH, DEARIE ME.

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT...

The End



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